

To Our First Grandchild.

Child of our child ! be more than ours ;
Come as a gift from God to men ;
Teach us the secret of love-born truth,
Write us a gospel with living pen.

Bring in thine eyes a star of truth,
Bring in thy mind God's thought for us
Bring in thine heart a thrill divine,
Bring in thine hand a blessing thus !

Draw us on thine own simple way,
Show us in thee that way to light ;
Tell us to ask and seek and learn—
Teach us the lesson of growing sight.

Be to us what the Saviour meant,
Set in the midst as the little one ;
Be our rebuke if we refuse
Ever to strive till the crown is won.

Be our example and teach us, dear :
Open to life, open to light ;
Stretching a little hand out for all,
Little eyes *seeing* with all their might !

Never content with mastered powers,
Never content no more to know ;
Ever reveal the secret of life—
Life that must grow and grow and grow.

Better than "infinite," *perfect* love
Rings in thy voice, a living call ;
Ever press upward and bid us come,
Never content with less than all.

From an Interleaved Prayer-book.

Is the art of prayer-writing quite lost ? They say we cannot build as Wykeham built, paint as Zeuxis painted, or sing as Homer sang ; but are we so degenerate that we cannot pray ? It would seem that we cannot ; for no one would place the thin productions of our archbishops and the oily lengths of our family devotions side by side with the simple metaphor and the pregnant phrase of the Collects of the English Church. Modern prayers want harmony, directness, grace. If printed with the prayers of our forefathers they may be picked out by the most inexperienced eye—weeds in a garden of delight.

More than this ; we cannot even copy ; for if we condescend to study older writers we take the quaint turn of syntax and leave the spirit of the phrase untouched. "As at this time" is good enough for us to harp upon ; "lighten our darkness" we do not attain unto. I may be wrong ; and the professional prayer-writer will point protestingly to no end of books ; but I am not wrong in saying that there is a wealth of strange and powerful prayers hidden away in old breviaries and primers ; and I give from an interleaved Prayer-book a few specimens. They are given without any guesses at the authorship, and without any theories as to date. They are merely what they look like,—noteworthy petitions to Almighty God.

The devout in all ages are wont to keep a "little prayer" for the various occupations of the day. Sir Thomas Overbury's "fair and happy milkmaid" is "always accompanied by old songs and prayers—but short ones ; and she fears no evil because she thinks none." So, many a prayer is to be used "at the lighting up of candles," "while shaving," "on rising," "on retiring to rest," "while washing the hands," "on hearing the sound of the clock."

Inter lavandum manus.

Ablue Domine Deus aqua tuae divinae gratiae animum meum ab omnibus vitiorum sordibus et inquinamentis quibus totus in conspectu tuo insordescit. Asperge illum hyssopo verae poenitentiae et compunctionis ut in limpidissimo gratiae tuae fonte lotus supra nivem dealbari tibi exinde jugiter inservire valeam per Jesum Christum.

Wash my soul, O Lord God, with the water of Thy Divine grace, from all the stains and filth of vice with which in Thy sight it is wholly defiled. Sprinkle it with the hyssop of true penitence and sorrow, that I, in the limpid fountain of Thy grace washed white as snow, may be able to serve Thee in purity from this day forth, through Jesus Christ.

Quoties horam sonare audis dic

Concede mihi Domine Deus felicem ac salutarem vivendi ac moriendi horam.

As often as you hear the clock, say

Grant me, Lord God, a happy and a healthful hour in my life and in my death.

Meridie (a mid-day Prayer.)

O Lord, the sunrise is at height for this day upon me, but lift up the light of Thy countenance, and I shall be whole. Make all darkness and spiritual shadows short upon me, and shorter in me, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Morning Prayer.

O God, who dividedst the day from the night, separate our deeds from the gloom of darkness, that, ever meditating on things holy, we may continually live in Thy light, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But there are other occupations in the day; now and then a field is bewitched, and a prayer is needed to make it fruitful; or evil spirits gather round the children's cot, and "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John" must "bless the bed that I lie on"; there are vague and nameless things that wait in the darkness for the passing soul; there is danger everywhere for the lonely traveller; there is greater danger in the chattering and chaffing crowd. "As often as I have gone amongst men," says Kempis, "less of a man did I return." Against all these evils and many more, the simple books of old give us remedies which sound rather odd to-day. A pony is lamed; you have your charm.

Christ rade: the foal's foot slade: He off lighted: the foal's foot righted: in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

A child is seized with a stitch. "Writh Cristes mael and sing thrithe thaer on this and pater noster—longinus miles

lancea punxit dominum et restitit sanguis et recessit dolor." "Write Christ's cross, and say thrice over the place: Longinus the soldier pierced the Lord with his spear, and the blood stayed, and the pain went." In parts of England to-day, a child will lean down and cross his shoe, and the following verses are associated with the complete cure of cramp:—

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, ease us I beg,
The devil is tying a knot in my leg;
Three crosses we make for to ease us;
Two for the robbers, and one for Christ Jesus.

At the corners of the unfruitful field our forefathers would stand and would put hallowed soap and hallowed salt in a hole in the plough handle, and would say, "Erce, erce, erce, Mother Earth, may the Almighty grant thee, the Eternal Lord, fertile crops and broad barley, and all the crops of the earth. Hail to thee, Mother Earth, that maintainest mortals, be growing and fertile by the goodness of God, filled with fodder, our flock to feed again."

Domine Jesu Christe te Supplices oramus ut mittere digneris spiritum sanctum tuum et benedictionem tuam cum sancto angelo tuo super creaturam salis et aquae. Defendat Deus segetes nostras et omnes fructus a vermibus a volatilibus a demonibus et ab omnibus malis ut magnificetur nomen tuum Deus in omni loco per Dominum nostrum. . . .

Lord Jesu Christ, we suppliants beseech Thee to deign to send Thy Holy Spirit and Thy blessing, with Thy holy angel, upon the creature of salt and water. May God defend our crops and all our fruits from insects, from birds, from demons, and from all evil things, that Thy name, O God, may be magnified in every place, through our Lord. . . .

Or, again, "Habraham, Habraham," is invoked to prevent the devil injuring the cattle by night. The prayer suggests a very strong bodyguard for the equae, and the caprae.

Deus ad dexteram, angelus ad sinistram prophetae vos prosequuntur martyres antecedent vos, vos custodiet Dominus oves et boves vitulos equos et apes custodientque vos pastores — signum crucis Christi Jesu in nomine Dei summi.

God on the right hand, the angel on the left, the prophets shall follow you, the martyrs go before you, the Lord shall guard you, sheep and oxen, calves, horses, and bees, and the shepherds shall watch over you with this — the sign of the cross of Christ Jesus in the name of God most high.

Perhaps the traveller is in a hurry and unable to run through his quota of psalm and prayer, which his book of hours enjoins

on him. Forthwith he writes down the alphabet, and, with a boldness at which we cannot but smile, he prays Almighty God to arrange the letters from A to Z into prayers which will protect the wanderer from harm.

Ritus brevissimus Recitandi Breviarium, pro itinerantibus et scrupulosis.

Dicatur Pater et Ave. Deinde : A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z.

V. Per hoc alphabetum notum
R. Componitur Breviarium totum.

Oremus.

Deus qui ex viginti quatuor literis totam sacram scripturam et breviarium istud componi voluisti, junge, disjunge, et accipe ex his viginti quatuor literis matutinas cum laudibus, primam, tertiam, sextam, nonam, vespers et completorium, per Jesum Christum dominum nostrum. Amen,

Signat se dicens : Sapienti pauca.

V. In pace in idipsum
R. Dormiam et requiescam.

A short way of saying the Breviary, for travellers and scrupulous persons.

Say the Pater and the Ave. Then "A B Z."
Of this well-known alphabet
The whole breviary is composed.

Let us pray.

God who didst will that by four and twenty letters all holy Scripture and that our breviary should be made, join, separate and from these four and twenty letters receive our matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

He crosses himself, saying : Little is enough for the wise.

Therefore in peace
I will sleep and take my rest.

Or we are by the bedside of the dying and the prayer for the passing soul floats with the soul away.

For them that be in extreme pangs of death.

O, pitiful Physician and healer both of body and soul, Christ Jesus, vouchsafe to cast Thy merciful eye upon Thy poor and sinful creature who lieth here captive and bound with sickness ; turning his weakness to Thy glory and to his health. And vouchsafe, good Lord, to send him patience and sufferance that he may steadfastly continue to the end ; and that he may with a true and perfect faith fight manfully against all temptations of the devil when he may no longer continue.

A final commendation of the dying.

Depart, O Christian soul, out of this world in the name of God the Father Almighty who created thee ; in the name of Jesus Christ His Son who suffered for thee ; in the name of the Holy Ghost who has been poured into thee ; may thy place be this day in peace and thy habitation in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The soul is gone. Nothing is left but the commemoration of the dead.

O Lord, Creatour of soule and body, remember those that are departed out of this world, refresh them in Thy Tabernacle, passe them thither from horrible lodgings, draw them out of darknesse and dolour.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, set Thy holy passion, cross, and death between Thy judgment and our souls both now and at the hour of death, and moreover vouchsafe to grant unto the living mercy and grace, to the dead pardon and rest, to Thy holy church peace and concord, and to us wretched sinners life and joy everlasting ; which livest and reignest God with the Father and the Holy Ghost world without end. The glorious passion of our Lord Jesus Christ deliver us from sorrowful weariness and bring us to the joys of Paradise.

O God, the Lorde of pardon, graunt unto the solle of Thy servaunt (the yeres mynd of whose death we have in remembrance) a place of rest, the blissful quiet and clereness of Thy light

O God, that arte Creatour and Redemer of al faithful people ; graunt unto the solles of all true belevers being dead remission of all their sins, that through devout prayers they may obtayne Thy gracious pardon yt they have always desyred which shalt come to judge the quicke and the dead and the worlde by fyre. God have mercy on all Christen solles. Amen.

The prayers for the dead are numerous, and many of them are very old. Perhaps it is not too much to say that from time immemorial the Christian church in all countries has sanctioned the practice of praying for "all Christen solles."

But illness and death show only one side of the picture ; and life has its duties in the world and apart from the world. We read now and again the prayers of souls dedicating themselves to God and giving up the delights and dangers of "the world." Poor Thomas Haemmerlein, who wrote the "Imitation of Christ," had no "castles, castellanies, and country seats," and money in his purse there was none, but he abjures in solemn exaggerated phrase all that can keep him from the realisation of his ideal.

O Lord Jesus Christ, my hope and my sole refuge, the delight of my life and the guide of my ways, I do this day renounce all things that are in the world for the love of Thee. And this I long to perform for the honour

of Thy name. I renounce in the first place all my friends, parents, relations, and kinsfolk, all that are near and dear, known and familiar to me. Also all cities, towns, castles, castellanies, and country seats, with all mountains and valleys, rivers and fountains, fields, meadows, and woods, should they at any time be mine or be offered to me; all ornaments, rich household stuff, pleasant and magnificent houses; all psalteries, harps, organs, worldly music, songs, garland perfumes; all merriments, clubs, banquets, conversations, visits, salutations, favours, honours, delights of men; all buffooneries, noises, humours, plays, jests, wanderings, excursions, tumults, useless occupations; all riches, goods, emoluments, properties, charges, offices, dignities, solacements, recreations in the world, and all whatsoever either the flesh can be tempted to, allured or delighted with, or aught by which the spirit may be hindered, molested, or defiled.

But wives and children, the poor and those of low estate, landlords and all other sinners, require petitions also. It is an evil thing to be poor. Let us, they said, pray for those who are snarled in poverty. It is a worse thing to be slandered; let us pray pro inimicis; it is a sad thing to kneel or lie by the block; let us catch the last prayer. The words we quote are framed after antique patterns; but they have smoothed rough roads before now.

A Prayer against Carefulness.

O most deare and tender Father, our defender and nourisher, endue us with Thy grace, that we may cast off the great blindness of our mindes and carefulnesse of worldly thinges, and may put our whole studie and care in keeping of Thy holy lawe, and that we may laboure and travaile for our necessities in this life like the birdes of the aire and the lilies of the field, without care. For Thou hast promised to be carefull for us, and hast commanded that upon Thee we should cast all our care, which livest and reignest worlde without ende. Amen.

For a Competent Living.

Although I doubt not of Thy fatherly provision for this my poor and needy life, yet forasmuch as Thou hast both commanded and taught me by Thy dear Son to pray unto Thee for things necessary for this my life, I am bold at this present to come unto Thy divine majesty, most humbly beseeching Thee that as Thou hast given me life, so Thou wilt give me meat and drink to sustain the same; again, as Thou hast given me a body, so Thou wilt give me clothes to cover it, that I, having sufficient for my living, may the more freely and with the quieter mind apply myself unto Thy service and honour.

A Prayer for them that be in Poverty.

They that are snarled and entangled in the extreme penury of things needful for the body cannot set their minds upon Thee, O Lord, as they

ought to do; but when they be disappointed of the things which they do so mightily desire, their hearts are cast down and quail for excess of grief. Have pity upon them, therefore, O merciful Father, and relieve their misery through Thine incredible riches, that by the removing of their urgent necessity they may rise up to Thee in mind. Thou, O Lord, providest enough for all men with Thy most liberal and bountiful hand; but whereas Thy gifts are in respect of Thy goodness and free favour made common to all men, we through our naughtiness, niggardship, and distrust so make put out of order; let Thy goodness supply that which our iniquity hath plucked away. Give Thou meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, comfort Thou the sorrowful, cheer Thou up the dismayed, strengthen Thou the weak, deliver Thou them that are prisoners, and give Thou hope and courage to them that are out of heart.

For Landlords.

The earth is Thine, O Lord, and all that is contained therein; notwithstanding Thou hast given the possession thereof to the children of men to pass over the time of their short pilgrimage in this vale of misery. We heartily pray Thee to send Thy Holy Spirit into the hearts of all them that possess the grounds, pastures, and dwelling-places of the earth; that they, remembering themselves to be Thy tenants, may not rack and stretch out the rents of their houses and lands; nor yet take unreasonable fines and incomes, after the manner of covetous worldlings; but so let them out to others that the inhabitants thereof may be both able to pay the rents and also honestly to live and nourish their family and to relieve the poor. Give them grace also to consider that they are but strangers and pilgrims in this world, having here no dwelling-place, but seeking one to come; that they, remembering the short continuance of their life, may be content with that is sufficient, and not join house to house nor couple land to land to the impoverishment of others; but so behave themselves in letting out their tenements, lands, and pastures that after this life they may be received into everlasting dwelling-places, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Archbishop's (Laud's) Prayer, as he Kneeled by the Block.

Lord, I am coming as fast as I can. I know I must pass through the shadow of death before I can come to see Thee. But it is but *umbra mortis*, a mere shadow of death, a little darkness upon nature; but Thou, by Thy merits and passion, hast broke through the jaws of death. So, Lord, receive my soul, and have mercy upon me; and bless this kingdom with peace and plenty, and with brotherly love and charity, that there may not be this effusion of Christian blood amongst them, for Jesus Christ His sake, if it be Thy will.

To leave the prayers for a moment, we find many a quaint phrase in homily, sermon, or litany. Our own Litany is the work of ages, though for its present matchless beauty we are in Cranmer's debt: but it is by no means the only litany full

of music. The Golden Litany is well known, and the works of Bishop Andrews contain several litanies as well as this.

Act of Praise.

Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast created and brought me into this life, and so disposed of me that I should be	
A living soul	and not a senseless creature;
A man	and not a brute beast;
Civilised	and not barbarous;
Freeborn	and not a slave;
Legitimate	and not spurious;
Of honest parentage	and not of base or ignominious;
Perfect in senses	neither blind nor deaf;
Brought up	not exposed;
Trained to learning	not to mechanical arts;
Preserved from dangers and disgrace;	
In days of peace	not in storms of war;
Of sufficient estate, compelled neither to flatter nor to borrow;	
Delivered from innumerable transgressions.	

And a confession in an old Communion Service ordains that—

Also ye shall kneel down upon your kneys saying after me, y cry God mercy and our lady seynt Mary and all the holy company of hevyn, and my gostelyche fadyr of all the trespasse of syn that y haue don in thowte word other yn dede fro the tyme that y was bore yn to this tyme: that is to say in Pryde Envy Wrethe Slowthe Covetyse Gloteny and Lechery. The v commandments dyverse tymes y broke. The werkes of mercy y note fulfilled—my v wytes mis-spend.

What are we to say, though, to a sermon in praise of thieving? The sermon is vouched for and may have been delivered. We can see Parson Haben looking round on his mischievous audience with twinkling eye.

A Sermon in praise of Thieves and Thievery, made by Parson Haben upon a mold-hill at Hately Row, at the commandment of vij theeves who, after they had robbed him, commanded him to preach before them.

"I marvel that everye man wil seeme to dispraise theuerye and thinke the doers thereof worthy of Death, when it is a thing that commeth nere vnto vertue, and is vsed of all men of all sortes in all cuntryes, and so comaunded and allowed of God himselfe. Which thinge because I cannot soe sapiently shewe vnto you in soe shorte a tyme and in so shorte a place, I shall desire you, gentle theues to take in good parte this thinge that at this tyme commeth to minde, not misdoubtinge but you of your good knowledge are able to ad more vnto the same than this which I at this tyme shall shew vnto you: Ffirst, fortitude and stoutness, corage and boldness of stomacke

is compted of some a vertue, which, being graunted, who is he that will not judge theues to be vertuous, most stout, most hardye? I moste withoute feare. As for stealinge, that is a thinge vsual—who stealeth not? Ffor no only you that have besett me, but many other in many places; men, women, and children, Rich and Poor are daily of that facultye as the hangeman of Tiburne can testifie. That it is allowed of God himself is evident in many stories of the Scriptures. And if you but looke in the holy Scriptures of the Bible you shall find that theues have bin beloved of God: ffor Iacobe when he came out of Mesopotamia did steal his vncl's lambs: the same Iacob stale his brother Esawes blessings, and that God said, "I have chosen Iacob and refused Esau. The people of Israel when they came out of Egiptie did steal the Egiptians ringes and iewells and God commaunded them soe to doe. David, in the days of Abimelech the prieste, came into the temple and stole away the shewebread; and yet God saide this is a man according to my own heart. Also Christ himself, when he was here vppon earth did take an asse a colte that was none of His. And you know that God saide: This is my beloved Sonne in whom I delight. Thus may you see that most of all God delighteth in theues. I marvel, therefore, that men can despise your lives when that you are in all points almost like vnto Christ himselfe, for Christ had no dwelling-place, no more have you. Christ was at the last laid wait for in many places: so are you. Christ was called for: so shall you be. He was condemned: so shall you be. Christ also was hanged: so shall you be. He descended into hell: soe shall you. But in one point you differ: he ascended into heven: that shall you never doe without God's mercy, which God graunt for His mercy's sake, to whom, with the Sonne and Holy Gost, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever." After this sermon ended, which edified them soe muche they hadde so muche compassion on him that they gave him all his money again, and vij sh more for his sermon.

Far different from anything that I have quoted are the gorgeous addresses and prayers which we sometimes find in modern Romanist books. The accuracy, or the inaccuracy, of the 80,000 does not detract from the power of the following:—

*Prière au Coeur Eucharistique
pour les quatre-vingt mille agonisants de chaque jour;
soit environ un mourant par seconde.*

Priez.

Oh priez sans retard. A chaque seconde de votre vie, à chaque battement de votre cœur, tandis que vous parlez, que vous marchez, que vous dormez, insouciant et tranquille, une âme tombe entre les mains de Dieu vivant pour être éternellement jugée.

Cœur eucharistique de Jésus ayez pitié des mourants.

Priez.

Peut-être y a-t-il en déjà dans votre vie jours et des heures où vous-meme frappé par une mort imprevue fussiez tombé dans l'éternel abîme si

l'on n'avait prié pour vous. Peut-être dans l'avenir une secrète et fervente prière vous sauvera-t-elle encore d'une mort subite et malheureuse et d'éternels et inutiles regrets.
Coeur encharistique de Jésus ayez pitié des mourants.

For prayer like this addressed to Jesus we have to go back to very early times, the most eloquent being, I think, that famous prayer of Ludovicus Vives.

*On the minding of Christ's passion.
Corum imagine Cristi crucifixi.*

What man is this whom I behold, all bloody, with skin all torn with knubs and wales of stripes, hanging down His head for weakness towards His shoulders, crowned with a garland of thorns pricking through his skull into the hard brain, and nailed to a cross? What judge could be so cruel as to put Him to it? What hangmen could have so butcherly minds as to deal so outrageously with Him? Now I bethink myself, I know Him: it is Christ.

Art thou He that excellest all the children of men in beauty, on whose lips grace was shed most plentifully, yea, even with God's own hand? Where is that beauty of Thine—where the grace of Thy lips? I find it not. I see it not. Fleshly eyes conceive not so great a mystery. Bring Thy light nearer me, and give me power to look more wistly upon Thee. I see it is Jesus, the Son of God, the unspotted Lamb, without sin, without fault, without offence, which took my wickedness upon Him.

That which I deserved He suffered; and that which I could never have attained He giveth me.

O my Redeemer, Saviour, Deliverer, draw me to Thee that (being always mindful of Thy death) I may not be separated from Thy body through mine own unthankfulness so as Thou shouldst have been born in vain as in respect of me, and in vain have suffered most bitter death of Thine own accord for me.

I do not pretend that the prayers which I have quoted can rank as the equals of many in the Book of Common Prayer. But the majority, (of course I do not refer to the charms and spells) have about them that old-world flavour which our modern prayers lack. If ever a modern could have written a book of prayers, Dr. Johnson would have been the man; yet we know how much he distrusted his own powers. A volume of prayers he did write; but they are not modelled after ancient originals, and except that they show a side of the old hero's character which is usually forgotten, they are not valuable. One of the prayers, however, it will be well to copy down here.

*A prayer of Dr. Johnson for a visitation from the soul of his dead wife,
April 26th, 1752, being after 12 at night.*

O Lord, Governor of heaven and earth, in whose hand are embodied and departed spirits, if Thou hast ordained the souls of the dead to minister to the living, and appointed my departed wife to have care of me, grant that I may enjoy the good effects of her ministration and attention whether exercised by appearance, impulses, dreams, or in any other manner agreeable to Thy government. Forgive my presumption, enlighten my ignorance, and, however meaner agents are employed, grant me the blessed influence of Thy Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Notwithstanding the long words, the master touch is revealed in this prayer; while the greatest enemy of the old lion can hardly fail to think kindly of that bowed figure waiting, after twelve at night, for a vision from the grave.

It is not a very hard task to analyse the contents of ancient service books, and to adapt the thoughts to the wants of a nineteenth century; but the adapter must have scholarship, and must be able to distinguish a thought from a phrase; he must have sympathy with the men of his generation; and he must possess the power of writing English prose as Foxe and Raleigh, as Cranmer and Earle, wrote it. Until such a scholar appears, and perhaps it is as well that he should not appear, the old prayers will hold their own, uncopied, unrivalled, undethroned,—majestic fabrics left by bygone ages. If there be a stone in them uncarved, we cannot carve it now; if there be a niche unfilled, we cannot fill it. *Nihil tangimus quod non foedamus.*

